

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08091 182249Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 CPR-01 NSC-05 SS-15
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R 182112Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0621
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 08091

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINT, US, UR, CSCE, NATO
SUBJECT: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

REF: (A) STATE 92184, (B) STATE 53419

1. PER REF A, TRAVEL OFFICER PHONED MFA PROTOCOL OFFICER VACHNADZE TO ASK STATUS OF REPLY ON QUESTIONS POSED IN REF B. VACHNADZE REPLIED (AS HE HAS TWICE BEFORE THIS MONTH) THAT MFA IS STILL PREPARING ANSWERS AND HE IS UNABLE TO SAY WHEN THEY WILL BE READY.

2. IF MFA PERFORMS TO ITS USUAL STANDARDS, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS POSED REF B WILL BE FORTH-COMING ANYTIME SOON. THEREFORE, EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING OPINIONS:

A. ROAD TRAVEL FROM MOSCOW: SINCE 1978 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS HAVE GONE INTO EFFECT, EMBASSY AND DAO TRAVELERS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TRAVERSED ZAGORSK-YAROSLAVL, MOZHAYSK-MINSK, SERPUKHOV-SIMFEROPOL AND MALAYA DUBNA-VLADIMIR-SUZDAL ROADS. EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT THESE ROADS REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL

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OPEN SINCE NOTES WERE FILED FOR THESE TRIPS WITHOUT ASKING FOR CLOSED AREA EXCEPTION AND MFA ACCEPTED TRAVEL.

B. TRAVEL THROUGH SERPUKHOV: SERPUKHOV IS LISTED AS OPEN CITY IN 1978 NOTE. HOWEVER, KAP TRAVELERS REPORT THAT WHENEVER THEY DRIVE TO KIEV VIA SERPUKHOV THEY ARE WAVED BY GAI ONTO SERPUKHOV BYPASS AND NOT PERMITTED TO

ENTER TOWN. UNFORTUNATELY, NO ONE IN EMBASSY HAS TRAVELED SPECIFICALLY TO SERPUKHOV AND IT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN SOVIETS HAVE BARRED US FROM ROAD THROUGH TOWN. EMBASSY WILL TEST QUESTION THIS WEEKEND AND REPORT RESULTS.

C. LENINGRAD N.E. QUADRANT: CONGEN LENINGRAD REPORTS THAT ON TWO OCCASIONS SINCE 1978 NOTE WENT INTO EFFECT CONGEN OFFICERS HAVE BEEN STOPPED BY MILITIAMEN AND TOLD THEY COULD NOT ENTER N.E. QUADRANT AREA. THUS IT APPEARS THAT EVEN IF 1978 NOTE IMPLIES THIS AREA OPEN, OFFICIAL PRACTICE REMAINS TO KEEP IT CLOSED. CONGEN WILL ASK LENINGRAD DIPLOMATIC AGENCY BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO CLARIFY THIS ISSUE.

3. ON QUESTIONS RAISED IN REF A:

A. TRANS-SIBERIAN RR: ON APRIL 13, TRAVEL OFFICER ASKED VACHNADZE WHETHER TRAVELERS, BOTH EMBASSY AND TOURIST, COULD TAKE TRANS-SIBERIAN FROM MOSCOW TO NAKHODKA. VACHNADZE REPLIED THIS WAS POSSIBLE, PROVIDED NO STOPS WERE MADE EN ROUTE (I.E., STAY ON SAME TRAIN, TAKE NO EXCURSIONS INTO CITIES WHERE TRAIN STOPS). VACHNADZE ADDED THAT IF TRAVELER DESIRED TO STOP OFF IN CERTAIN CITIES THIS WOULD MAKE TRANS-SIB TRAVEL PERMISSION MORE COMPLICATED TO OBTAIN. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PRACTICE, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO RIDE ON ANY SECTIONS OF TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY, MUCH LESS ALL OF IT. MFA GENERALLY REQUIRES RAILWAY EXCURSIONS ALONG THE TRANS-SIB TO BE CHANGED TO AIR TRAVEL, EXCEPT ON THE "BOAT TRAIN" OF THE KHABAROVSK-NAKHODKA PORTION.

B. RR, AIR, ROAD ROUTES: EMBASSY HAS NO DEFINITIVE INFORMATION ON RR AND AIR ROUTES OPEN TO FOREIGNERS. THE ONLY RECENT CHANGE IN THE INTOURIST AUTO ROUTE STRUCTURE OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE IS THE OPENING OF THE ROVNO-BREST ROAD. INTOURIST AND AEROFLOT HAVE INFORMED EMBASSY THAT THEY ARE FORBIDDEN "BY REGULATION" FROM RELEASING RR AND AIR INFORMATION REQUESTED, AND HAVE DIRECTED EMBASSY TO MFA FOR ANSWERS. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY HAS FORWARDED TO MFA PROTOCOL ADDITIONAL DIPLOMATIC NOTE REQUESTING UP-TO-DATE LIST OF RR, AIR AND INTOURIST ROAD ROUTES OPEN TO FOREIGNERS. IN VIEW OF MFA'S PERFORMANCE ON FIRST NOTE SUBMITTED, EMBASSY NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT QUICK RESPONSE IS OBTAINABLE AND SUGGESTS DEPARTMENT GO AHEAD WITH PRELIMINARY MAPS WITHOUT RR AND AIR INFORMATION. TOON

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Message Attributes

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